

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----036637 221457Z /44

O R 221400Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7563
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 12237

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, SO, US
SUBJECT: SADAT ON SOMALIA

REF: (A) CAIRO 12189 (NOTAL), (B) STATE 170041 (NOTAL),
(C) CAIRO 12142 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: SADAT WISHES PRESIDENT CARTER TO KNOW THAT HE
HAS RECEIVED ANOTHER SPECIAL EMISSARY FROM SOMALI
PRESIDENT SIAD BARRE TO REQUEST ADDITIONAL
MILITARY ASSISTANCE. SPECIFICALLY, EGYPTIAN PILOTS
REQUESTED TO FLY SOMALI MIG-21'S. SADAT CONSIDERING
REQUEST AND, IF HE ACCEDES, ALSO POSSIBILITY OF SENDING
GROUND CREWS. SADAT RECALLED SOVIET INTENTION BACK
MEGISTU TO THE HILT. SOMALI ENVOY RELATED ETHIOPIAN
MIG-21'S HAVE BEGUN ATTACK SOMALI VILLAGES. SINCE
ETHIOPIANS HAVE NO MIG-21 PILOTS, "FOREIGN ELEMENTS"
MUST BE ASSISTING. SOMALIS ACCUSE SOUTH YEMENIS, CUBANS
AND ISRAEL OF ASSISTING ETHIOPIANS. CONTINUES TO SEE
HORN OF AFRICA SITUATION IN CONTEXT ULTIMATE THREAT TO
SUDAN. I TOLD HIM OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S DECISION IN
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PRINCIPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN MULTILATERAL EFFORT TO
PROVIDE DEFENSIVE ARMS, BUT NOT FOR USE IN OGADEN.
SADAT GRATIFIED, BUT OPINED SIAD BARRE'S PROFESSED DESIRE GET RID
OF SOVIETS, SADAT WILLING TAKE SOMALI PRESIDENT AT
VACE VALUE. END SUMMARY.

1. MET WITH SADAT FOR AN HOUR TODAY AT HIS GIZA RESIDENCE.

FOR LATTER PART OF MEETING, VP MUBARAK WAS PRESENT.
SADAT INDICATED REASON FOR SUMMONING ME WAS TO DISCUSS SOMALIA.

2. TWO DAYS AGO, SADAT RELATED, HE HAD SECRETLY RECEIVED
A SPECIAL EMISSARY FROM SOMALI PRESIDENT SIAD BARRE.
ALTHOUGH I ASKED HIS NAME, HE PROFESSED NOT TO REMEMBER
IT, BUT CALLED HIM THE "NO. 2 IN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE."
EMISSARY HAD BEEN WELL INFORMED AND ELOQUENT. HIS
PURPOSE HAD BEEN TO CONVEY RENEWED SIAD BARRE APPEAL
FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE. SINCE EGYPTIAN RESOURCES LIMITED,
SADAT HAD SENT HIM TO DAMASCUS TODAY TO DISCUSS SUBJECT
WITH ASAD. SYRIANS, SADAT NOTED, HAVE "MORE WAR GEAR
THAN WE--THEIR STORES ARE FULL."

3. SOMALI EMISSARY ASSERTED SIAD BARRE HAS ALREADY BEGUN
TO SEND OUT SOVIET EXPERTS. HOWEVER, THE SOMALI
PRESIDENT DOES NOT WANT TO MAKE THIS AN ISSUE. SOMALIA
IS A SMALL COUNTRY AND SOVIETS COULD MAKE DIFFICULTY.
SOMALI EMISSARY HAD BROUGHT SADAT UP TO DATE ON HORN OF
AFRICA SITUATION.

4. AS HE HAD EARLIER CONVEYED TO PRESIDENT CARTER,
SADAT RECALLED THAT THE SOVIETS INTEND TO BACK MEGISTU
TO THE HILT. THEY HAVE BEGUN TO DO THIS BY TANGIBLE MEANS.
SOMALI EMISSARY RELATED THAT ETHIOPIAN MIG-21'S HAD BEGUN
TO RAID SOMALI VILLAGES, ALTHOUGH HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT
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THE BORDER WAS NOT ALWAYS ASCERTAINABLE FROM THE AIR.
THE ETHIOPIANS, SADAT CONTENTED, CANNOT FLY MIG-21'S,
WHICH HAVE ONLY RECENTLY ARRIVED. ETHIOPIANS HAVE ONLY
F-5-E'S. THIS SUGGESTS THAT "FOREIGN ELEMENTS" ARE
ASSISTING ETHIOPIANS. THE SOMALIS ACCUSE THE SOUTH
YEMENIS, CUBANS AND ISRAELIS OF ASSISTING ETHIOPIANS.
IT IS CLEAR, SADAT CONTINUED, THAT ISRAEL IS HELPING
MEGISTU. ARRIVAL OF ISRAELI TRANSPORT PLANES IS OPEN
AND WELL KNOWN TO ALL.

5. SIAD BARRE HAD ASKED SADAT SEND HIM PILOTS FOR
SOMALI MIG-21'S, OF WHICH HE HAS TWENTY. SADAT
SAID HE IS CONSIDERING THE REQUEST AND IS DISPOSED TO GO
ALONG. IF HE DECIDES TO GO AHEAD, GROUND CREWS WILL
ALSO HAVE TO BE SENT. (HOW HE CAN DO SO WITH EGYPTIAN-
LIBYAN DUST-UP UNDERWAY REMAINS TO BE SEEN.)

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AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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EXDIS

6. SIAD BARRE HAD AGAIN ASSURED SADAT THAT HE IS HEADING TOWARD ENDING HIS RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS. SADAT RECALLED THAT HE HAD EARLIER ALREADY SENT ARMS TO SOMALIS FOR ASSISTANCE AND HAD USED C-130'S FOR THIS PURPOSE. THIS HAD ALLOWED SIAD BARRE TO CHALLENGE THE SOVIETS. THE SOMALI PRESIDENT WANTS TO CONTINUE TO DO SO, BUT NEEDS BACKING. SADAT HAD PREVAILED UPON KING KHALID TO MEET THE SOMALI EMISSARY AFTER SAUDIS HAD INITIALLY DECLINED TO RECEIVE HIM. UNSPECIFIED OTHERS ARE ALSO HELPING. SOMALIS, SADAT EMPHASIZED, MUST BE HELPED. WITH SOVIET ARMS POURING INTO ETHIOPIA, HE WAS CONCERNED THAT HIS WORST FEARS COULD MATERIALIZE. IF SOMALIA FALLS, ERITREA AND THE SUDAN WILL FOLLOW SOON AFTERWARDS. HE WANTED PRESIDENT CARTER TO KNOW OF THE ABOVE.

7. JUDGING FROM SADAT'S COMMENTS, HE HAD NOT YET HAD WORD FROM FAHMY OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S DECISION IN PRINCIPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN MULTINATIONAL EFFORT TO PROVIDE DEFENSIVE ARMS TO SOMALIA. I THEREFORE TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO TELL HIM ABOUT DECISION, NOTING DETAILS
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HAVE STILL TO BE WORKED OUT. IN MEANTIME, MATTER SHOULD BE CLOSELY HELD. I STRESSED ANY ARMS WE MAY PROVIDE WILL BE PURELY FOR DEFENSIVE PURPOSES AND THAT WE DO NOT WISH ARMS TO BE USED IN CONNECTION WITH SOMALI IRREDENTIST ASPIRATIONS IN OGADEN. I RECALLED HIS

EARLIER OFFER TO PROVIDE US WITH LIST OF ARMS GOE HAS SENT TO SOMALIA AND SAID I HAD YESTERDAY ASKED FAHMY FOR SUCH A LIST. I ASSUMED PRESIDENT HAS NO OBJECTION. SADAT SAID LIST WILL BE PROVIDED.

8. SADAT WAS PLEASED AT PRESIDENT'S DECISION, BUT CANDIDLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SIAD BARRE'S PRINCIPAL REASON FOR WANTING ARMS IS TO USE THEM IN OGADEN. THIS DID NOT IN THE LEAST TROUBLE SADAT, SINCE PEOPLE OF OGADEN ARE ETHNICALLY SOMALI AND ANYTHING THAT THROWS MENGISTU OFF BALANCE DESIRABLE. HE THOUGHT IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO FIND ANOTHER SOURCE OF ARMS FOR SOMALI IRREGULARS IN OGADEN.

9. ALLUDING TO SADAT'S REITERATION THAT SIAD BARRE WANTS TO CHANGE HIS SOVIET ALIGNMENT, I ASKED IF THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN ANY EVIDENCE OF THIS. WHILE WE ARE PREPARED TO ASSIST AND HAVE HEARD SIMILAR STATEMENTS, WE OURSELVES HAVE SEEN LITTLE TANGIBLE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE SOMALI CONTENTION. WE WONDER, THEREFORE, WHETHER SIAD BARRE IS SIMPLY SEEKING WAY TO GET THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS. SADAT ACKNOWLEDGED HE, TOO, IS UNCERTAIN ABOUT SIAD BARRE'S INTENTIONS. AS HE HAD PREVIOUSLY TOLD ME, HOWEVER, HE HAS HIGH REGARD FOR THE SOMALI PRESIDENT'S INTELLIGENCE AND IS FOR THE TIME BEING PREPARED TO TAKE HIM AT FACE VALUE. WITH ENOUGH BACKING, SADAT THOUGHT SIAD BARRE COULD ULTIMATELY BE PERSUADED LESSEN HIS SOVIET CONTENTION OR EVEN GET RID

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OF IT. IN ANY EVENT, HE THOUGHT THE EFFORT WAS WORTH MAKING. AS HE CONTINUES SEE IT, THERE IS A GREAT DEAL AT STAKE IN TERMS OF CONTAINING SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN THE HORN OF AFRICA.

10. COMMENT: AS IS SO OFTEN THE CASE, SADAT'S PRESENTATION WAS SOMEWHAT DISJOINTED AND REPETITIVE. HE HAD JUST ARRIVED FROM ALEXANDRIA AND WAS PREPARING HIMSELF ROA A MAJOR ADDRESS THIS EVENING. PURPOSE OF MESSAGE, AS BEST AS I COULD MAKE IT OUT, WAS SIMPLY TO INFORM PRESIDENT CARTER OF SIAD BARRE'S APPEAL AND TO REITERATE HIS OWN EARLIER REQUEST FOR US ARMS AID TO SOMALIA. INFORMATION ON PRESIDENT CARTER'S DECISION WAS CLEARLY WELCOMED AND MADE SADAT'S OWN PRESENTATION JUST A BIT ANTICLIMACTIC.

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